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ART AND PROGRESS

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LAWLESS ART

Attention has been focused during the past few weeks on what has been described as a progressive movement in art by an International Exhibition set forth in the 69th Regiment Armory, New York, under the auspices of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, of which Mr. Arthur B. Davies is president. This exhibition contained over one thousand exhibits—paintings and works in sculpture—by artists of France, Germany, Holland, England and America, the majority of whom were, or were supposed to be in sympathy with the creed of the Post Impressionists. It was this which gave the exhibition note. Indeed, it is safe to

say that had the works of these extremists been excluded, this exhibition would have attracted no more notice than the hundred and one other exhibitions that are successively held in New York. A comely woman modestly gowned can pass through any crowded thoroughfare without attracting attention, but let her bedeck herself gayly and improperly and every head will be turned in her direction; the man who works diligently to fulfill his mission in life may never become known to the public, whereas the name of him who throws a bomb or commits an assassination will be in every one's mouth; the quiet worshipper in a House of Prayer comes and goes unremarked, but the mad man who desecrates by violence the House of God will be noted by all who may witness his blasphemy. The notoriety may in each instance be gained at some cost—the cost of the respect of law-abiding, self-respecting citizens. But what of that? Has not each so-called offender asserted his or her liberty, awakened the slothful, created sensation, done away with the monotony of commonplace life? The ugliness of the crime does not offend the evildoer, who rejoices in his courage and decries the cowardice of those who will not follow. In a well organized civilization such overt individualism is held in check by law—the profligate is debarred from society, the bomb thrower is imprisoned, the defamer and lunatic is confined, not for the good of the individual, but for the protection of the many who might be harmed. Why, then, may we ask ourselves do we so blithely tolerate these same crimes in art? If the "Post Impressionists," or the "Modernists" or "Expressionists," whatever they may choose to call themselves, did not ask us to take their works seriously it would be different—were they jesters we might laugh at their jests, but they come in the guise of reformers, and as such we find them vulgar, lawless and profane. As Mrs. Adams points out in an article published elsewhere in this number of *ART AND PROGRESS* their sin is not merely against art, but against

nature. One may hypnotize oneself into seeing beauty in deformity, but we all know that it really is not there, as the best definition we can find for beauty is perfection. The exponents of this movement call themselves progressives, but when we ask of them the way, they point over their shoulders. It is their belief that one can gain simplicity by returning to savagery.

Like all excesses this movement will undoubtedly run its course and dig its own grave. Some good may come of it, but the chances are that the evil will outweigh the good. Because critics have erred in the past in matters of judgment they have become timid of expression and over-indulgent, and insurgency is, as always, hot spurred. Let us, therefore, not follow blindly, but pause and think.

NOTES

A. F. A. The Fourth Annual CONVENTION Convention of the American Federation of Arts will be held in Washington, D. C., on Thursday and Friday, the 15th and 16th of May. There will be two special sessions, one on the afternoon of the 15th devoted to Small Museums, and the other on the morning of the 16th devoted to the subject of Industrial Art. There will be three principal speakers at each session who will present papers of about twenty minutes in length. Abundant time will be given for open discussion. Both papers and discussion will be along constructive lines dealing with facts rather than generalities with the object of definite accomplishment.

The morning session of the 15th and the afternoon session of the 16th will be given over to the work of the Federation and affiliated organizations. The annual election will take place on the latter day and among the important matters which will be brought up for consideration will be the revision of the constitution.

In order to bring the delegates in closer touch with one another as well as with the Federation's work, it is planned to have round-table luncheons each day.

Entertainment in the way of afternoon or evening receptions will be provided and every effort will be made to secure for each affiliated organization practical benefit through representation.

Washington in May offers special attractions to visitors and the date of the convention has been fixed with the thought of the pleasure and convenience of those who will attend.

The sessions will all be open to those who may be interested and delegates from organizations not yet affiliated with the Federation will be made welcome.

ITEMS OF
INTEREST
FROM BOSTON

There have been hung recently in the Western Art Corridor of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, rugs and pieces of rugs lent from the collection of Dr. George A. Kennedy and Mrs. Mary Price Kennedy. Dr. and Mrs. Kennedy's collection has been made during several years spent by them in Europe, and this is the first time that any of it has been seen in America. Furthermore, the rugs are, with one exception, quite different from any previously exhibited in Boston. The one exception is a large fragment of a so-called Ispahan or Herat carpet, which class is already represented by five pieces belonging to the Ross collection and two large complete rugs, one lent by Mr. Lockwood de Forest and one from the estate of Mr. T. Jefferson Coolidge, Jr.

Six pieces of Gothic sculpture have lately been added to the Museum's collection through the generosity of a Visiting Committee.

Mr. Huger Elliott, Superintendent of Educational Work at the Art Museum, is giving a series of ten illustrated talks on "Everyday Art." Among the subjects treated are Public Buildings, Stained Glass, House Furnishings, Silver and China.

A special exhibition of European pottery and porcelain drawn from the reserve collection of the Museum, augmented by loans, was opened in the Forecourt Room on February 3d and will continue until the end of March.